

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wow! Two years can sure pass quickly, and now, at the gentle reminding nudge from a very patient *Wingspan* editor, I find myself writing my final Message from the President. Given this is my 'exit' letter, I think it warrants some reflection on our Foundation. In August 1965, a group of over 60 individuals met in Wisconsin to discuss the state of knowledge regarding the dramatic declines of Peregrine Falcons. In September 1965, 13 individuals, consisting of researchers and management personnel from the United States, Canada, and Switzerland, met to discuss strategies to address the issue. Subsequently, in February 1966, articles of incorporation were signed formally forming the Raptor Research Foundation. Although the 'origins' of RRF is open to a bit of debate, the meetings in 1965 are generally considered as its 'founding' and we, as a Foundation, are celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at our 2015 meeting.



I look at the origins of the Foundation and its status today, and contemplate whether it has met the promise of what it was set to be, as stated in Article 1, sec. 2 of our Bylaws: *The purposes shall be to stimulate the dissemination of information concerning raptorial birds among interested persons worldwide and to promote a better public understanding and appreciation of the value of birds of prey.* In honesty, I believe so. Our membership rolls as of September 2015 is illustrative of this. We currently have 939 members identifying themselves as from 48 different countries. While the majority are from

the United State (72.4%), Canada (6.2%), Spain (2.3%), UK (2.8%) and Germany (1.7%), a look at our membership list reveals our capacity to stimulate research and disseminate information on birds of prey reaches far and wide. Enhancing this is our recent agreement with the printer of the 2007 publication of *Raptor Research and Management Techniques*, allowing us to not only post a free electronic version on our website, but to also to translate this important publication into other languages for free distribution. Our Conservation Committee is crucial as the face of RRF in responding to requests for input and evaluation regarding contemporary raptor conservation issues. Our *Journal of Raptor Research* has grown and become in very well respected journal that, if limited, is only due to being a taxonomic specialty. Including our

journal in BioOne has greatly expanded our reach and ability to disseminate contemporary information on raptor ecology. I could go on, and there is certainly room for improvement, but yes, I think our Foundation is strong and our founders would be pleased at what has become of their fledgling venture.

In parting, I want to pay due acknowledgement to the many people that keep RRF running. First, I especially want to thank Ted Swem and Libby Mojica, the vice presidents that have served with me. A president of an organization really needs a sounding board to discuss ideas and issues; for that I sincerely thank Ted and Libby. Jessi Brown has done a great job as our new treasurer, and Greg George has kept our records straight: together they hold really important jobs in the foundation. Joan Morrison and Rick Watson have always been on the spot in responding to conservation issues, and the journal just keeps getting better under Cheryl Dykstra's watch. Brian Washburn has been doing a great job with *Wingspan*, and I hope the membership will increase the contributions to it. I thank Jim Bednarz for stepping up and taking the over the Nominations Committee. Gary Santolo has supervised a revamping of the awards program, and Mike Kochert has been as steadfast as ever as our financial committee chair (and much appreciated institutional memory and voice of level-headed advice for me!). Our 2015 meeting will be the last for Kate Davis and James Dwyer in their roles of Conference Committee and Scientific Program Committee Chairs, respectfully. I really cannot express how much RRF owes these 2 for the work they have done for RRF over the last several conferences, but if you get the chance, buy them a drink in Sacramento; they most assuredly deserve it. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of 2 other people. First, Travis Booms has taken the Early Career Raptor Research committee from an idea to what may be one of the most important committees for the future of the foundation and increased membership. Second, Libby Mojica has overseen our website, supervised the update of our logo, taken the office of vice-president, picked up the slack whenever I dropped it, and always been a sounding board when I needed one.



I thank all of the board members that have served during my tenure. It has been a pleasure and learning experience to work with all of them. A Board of Directors is a group of individuals elected to serve the interest of the foundation. As such, their perspectives and viewpoints do not always coincide, especially when dealing with challenging issues. But the board and officers always worked together to serve the best interests of RRF.

And finally, as I leave this position, I want to thank the membership for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president. It is something I never would have envisioned for myself those many years ago when I first joined RRF as a student member. It was an honor, and I hope I did the position justice.

I hope to see you in Sacramento; it's gonna be a good one!

*Clint Boal*

**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC (Founded in 1966)**

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For more information about the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. (founded in 1966), please visit the RRF website at: <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/>.

Persons interested in birds of prey are invited to join the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF). *Wingspan* is available to all members on the RRF website. Members also receive *The Journal of Raptor Research* (ISSN 0892-1016), which is published quarterly. For membership and subscription information, please contact: **Ornithological Societies of North America**, 5400 Bosque Boulevard, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; 1-254-399-9636 (phone); 1-254-776-3767 (fax); [business@osnabirds.org](mailto:business@osnabirds.org) (email); <http://www.osnabirds.org> (web).



**Editor's Note** – Thanks to the following contributors for this issue of the *Wingspan*: **Clint Boal, Travis Booms, Allen Fish, Gene Jacobs, Erin Katzner, Libby Mojica, Joan Morrison, Jemima Parry-Jones, and several photographers.**

*Wingspan* welcomes contributions from RRF members and others interested in raptor biology and management. Please submit contributions via email to Brian Washburn, *Wingspan* Editor, at [rrfwingspan@gmail.com](mailto:rrfwingspan@gmail.com). For long contributions, please send as a MS Word attachment. If you are submitting photos, please include a caption and photo credit. Contribution deadline for the next issue is **15 February 2016**.

All issues of *Wingspan* and content guidelines are available at:  
<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/publications/wingspan-newsletter/online-newsletters-pdfs>

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## **Member Profile – Kate Davis**

Submitted by Brian Washburn

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The Raptor Research Foundation is a truly diverse group, consisting of members from academia, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, educational groups and foundations, falconers, and many other facets. In an effort to continue introducing the amazing people in RRF, the Member Profile within this issue of *Wingspan* focuses on someone who inspires us and refreshes our passion for raptors through her photography, books, art, educational programs....and most importantly by spreading her infectious high-energy spirit. Kate Davis, the “raptor world” is indebted to you for all that you have done and continue to do for RRF and the natural world. Thank you!

At a young age Kate began her life-long passion of rehabilitating raptors with the Cincinnati Zoo Junior Zoologists Club. She obtained a degree in Zoology from the University of Montana in 1982. She moved to a ranch outside of Missoula, MT and began the process of obtaining all the federal and state permits needed for her future plans. In 1988, Kate founded Raptors of the Rockies, a non-profit raptor education organization that provides programs to educate schools and the public about raptors and their importance within ecosystems. Since the beginning, she and the “teaching team” of 18 permanently disabled raptors and falconry birds have provided approximately 1,560 programs for more than 126,000 audience members! Kate is currently the Executive Director of Raptors of the Rockies and in addition to her very busy education program schedule has been the author of 5 books on raptors. Her latest book, *American Kestrel: Pint-sized Predator*, came to press in 2014. Kate is also an avid photographer and artist, and her work is truly magical and awe-inspiring!



**Kate Davis with one of the  
“Teaching Team” Raptors**

Kate has been a long-time member and supported of RRF. She has served as the Chair of the Education Committee for 3 years, Raptors of the Rockies hosted the 2008 Raptor Research Foundation Annual Conference, and currently is finishing up 3 years of service as the Chair of the RRF Conference Committee. During her tenure as the Conference Committee Chair, she has worked tirelessly (and with an unbelievably positive and dynamic flare) to ensure that the Annual Conferences run smoothly and are enjoyed by absolutely everyone that attends. If you see her at the upcoming Conference in Sacramento, please express your appreciation. Personally, I would venture to say that Kate rivals “Miss Rapture” in her iconic status to RRF!



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## **RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**4–8 November 2015  
Sacramento, California USA**

It's been 30 years since the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF) met in Sacramento, California, and it's time to revisit the Golden State with some timely topics for birds of prey of the West and across the globe. Among the cutting edge symposium topics will be: Wind Energy Impacts on Raptors, Golden Eagle Research, the Conservation of Island Raptors, and Raptor Diseases and Toxins. RRF 2015 will also feature the very first symposium dedicated to Climate Change and Raptors!

***A SPECIAL NOTE to RRF MEMBERSHIP:***

***As of mid-September, we have already sold 180 tickets toward the RRF 2015 conference through on-line registrations. Sales will be capped around 420 due to space in the general session rooms. We strongly suggest that RRF members who have not already registered for the conference do so (on-line) ASAP, so that they can secure a space at this eventful and historic conference!***

**Hovering White-tailed Kite**



© George Eade



© Chris Briggs

**Swainson's Hawk  
with its Prey**

## CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Wednesday, 4 November 2015 will be a pre-meeting day, featuring Early Career classes in raptor research methods with top flight instructors (still open for sign ups), the California-Nevada Golden Eagle Working Group (open to all interested parties), and the annual meeting of the RRF Board of Directors.

November 5<sup>th</sup> will jump-start with an overview talk by keynote speaker Dr. Pete Bloom, California's pre-eminent raptor biologist with more years and species studied than any other researcher. Pete's work spans four decades and includes some of the most critical studies of California birds of prey, among them, Swainson's, Red-shouldered, and Red-tailed hawks, Golden Eagles, California Condors, and Barn Owls.

November 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> will feature general scientific papers on raptor biology and conservation, as well as the symposiums mentioned above which will be announced as they are scheduled. A poster reception will be held Thursday evening, November 5<sup>th</sup>, although posters will be available for viewing through Saturday.

Other evening events for Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup> will include the Early Career reception to mingle younger and elder biologists, as well as a Special Reception for alums of the California Raptor Center. Later on Friday night, famed field guide author William S. Clark will give a special preview of two field guides that are forthcoming in 2016: *African Raptors* and *Raptors of Mexico and Central America*.



**Dr. Pete Bloom**



**Professor Joe Hickey**

In August 1965, Professor Joe Hickey of the University of Wisconsin gathered together more than 60 scientists to discuss the sudden disappearance of the Peregrine Falcon from many parts of the planet. This was among the first gathering of biologists anywhere to analyze (and reverse) a conservation problem, in other words, a true birth place of modern conservation biology. For Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>'s opening session, we have invited the members of the Madison Peregrine Symposium to gather once again, this time as a panel to discuss and to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that game-changing event in 1965. Not only will this be an opportunity to thank the members for their participation, but also a rare chance to hear the issues and strategies surrounding the Peregrine recovery in its earliest stages. And perhaps to ask new questions: What do these struggles portend for modern raptor conservation biology? Has the world become so greatly layered by economics and ecology, by climate and technology, that the Madison Peregrine Symposium would be overwhelmed today?

The Saturday events will end with our annual RRF banquet, which will include the awards ceremony for outstanding achievements during 2015.

Lastly, Sunday, November 8<sup>th</sup> will be a field trip day for some, and a departure day for others. Field trips are currently set up to several local birding sites, known for their rich raptor fauna: the Solano Grasslands and the Cosumnes River Reserve. A full day excursion will trek to the Altamont Pass to witness the largest and oldest wind farm with Dr. Doug Bell, who will review the past and present research on Golden Eagles and other raptors in this modified landscape. Finally, a short drive will take interested conference goers over to the California Raptor Center, one of the country's longest-running bird of prey rehab and research facilities, and part of the University of California at Davis' Veterinary Medicine Teaching Hospital.

For more details and to sign up for the RRF 2015 conference and/or for any of the associated classes or events, please visit:

<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference>

To offer ideas or financial support, for vendors, or for other information please contact the RRF 2015 local chair, Allen Fish at [afish@parksconservancy.org](mailto:afish@parksconservancy.org).



**GOLDEN GATE  
RAPTOR  
OBSERVATORY**

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## **EARLY CAREER RAPTOR RESEACHER SKILLS COURSES**

The RRF Early Career Raptor Researcher (ECRR) Committee will be hosting a day of raptor research skills short courses for ECRRs at the annual meeting in Sacramento, CA on Wednesday, **4 November 2015**. Classes are only available to students and early career professionals ( $\leq 3$  years post-graduation) that are current members of RRF. Classes will be taught by leading experts and will focus on hands-on skill-building that is typically not available in traditional undergraduate or graduate classes. Class sizes will be small and course lengths will vary from 3 to 8 hours and will be scheduled to allow students to select from a variety of courses throughout the day. A one-hour lunch break is scheduled between 12:00 and 13:00 and participants are responsible for their own food. Registration is currently open. ECRRs should register for these courses on a first-come basis through the online conference registration. A small fee will be charged to help defray class expenses (\$20-\$40). Please note the short courses will occur on the day before the scientific program (Wednesday) commences and will require that participants arrive at the conference venue by 08:00 on 4 November 2015. If arriving the night before, we encourage participants to share lodging expenses by finding other participants via ECRR Facebook or the ECRR's Google Groups with which to share rooms.

## **Partial Day Courses**

### **Safely Accessing Raptor Nests**

*Instructor:* **Joel Pagel**, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*Course Description:* Safety (climber and raptors), gear and use, basic knots, rappelling, ascending fixed ropes, getting into nests, and bird handling while aloft. Class will be taught at a local climbing wall or outdoor facility.



### **Raptor Trapping and Handling Techniques for Scientific Research**

*Instructor:* **Pete Bloom**, Western

Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology

*Course Description:* Safe trapping and handling methods, including the use of the Bal-chatri, Dho-Ghaza, bow nets, and other methods. Permitting, health and welfare of birds, trap construction, noose tying, and trap use will be covered, including hands-on instruction.

### **Techniques for Handling, Auxiliary Marking, Measuring, and Blood Sampling Raptors after Capture: A Bird in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush**

*Instructors:* **Dan Varland**, Coastal Raptors and **John Smallwood**, Montclair State University.

*Course Description:* This course will give students hands-on experience in applying the following types of auxiliary markers to raptors: conventional USGS leg bands, colored leg bands, leg flags, patagial markers, dyes, and feathers (through feather imping). Students will also have the opportunity to learn and practice proper handling, measuring and blood sampling techniques.

### **Raptor Field & In-hand ID, Ageing & Sexing, Recent Taxonomic Changes in Raptors, Molt and its Use in Ageing**

*Instructors:* **Bill Clark**, Harlingen, TX and **Buzz Hull**, Golden Gate Raptor Observatory

*Course Description:* This class will begin with an overview of the ID of diurnal raptors, followed by raptor in-hand ID, ageing, and sexing. Next will be a short discussion of recent changes in taxonomy of raptors, especially changes in scientific names, most as result of DNA analyses. The rest of the class will focus on remige molt and its use in ageing.





**All Day Courses:**

**Harnessing Raptors with Transmitters Workshop**

*Instructors:* **Steve Lewis** and **Brian Millsap**, US Fish and Wildlife Service

*Course Description:* This class will cover the process of attaching a transmitter (either VHF or satellite) to raptors, from initial thoughts of the bird's welfare to specifics of making harnesses and attaching them to birds.



**Raptor Necropsy Workshop**

*Instructor:* **Krysta Rogers**, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

*Course Description:* This class will discuss how to characterize and investigate raptor mortality, conduct a gross necropsy, and collect appropriate samples for disease and contaminant diagnostics. Permitting, zoonotic diseases, and common causes of raptor mortality will be covered.

**Please contact the ECRR Committee Chair Travis Booms, or visit the Raptor Research Foundation website if you have questions on these courses. We hope to see you there!**

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**News from the RRF**

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**Update from the RRF Conservation Committee**

Submitted by Joan Morrison

RRF Conservation Committee Co-chair Rick Watson coordinated with President of the Ornithological Council (OC) Ellen Paul on a letter recently submitted to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that commented on a current issue of much concern. The OC is a consortium of 12 scientific societies of ornithologists, including RRF, and it speaks for ornithologists in their role as scientists. The issue is the proposed Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and the specific regulations or policies that may be developed to address the incidental take of bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

The USFWS' current draft policy regarding take addresses the number of individuals of the most common species allowed as take under scientific permits. By contrast, the proposed incidental take policy would result in take of an unknown number of birds of many, if not most, MBTA species per year. A major concern noted by the OC is that several industries, including telecommunications and energy producers, have already sought Congressional protection from the MBTA.

Ellen worked with officers and committee chairs from all 12 member societies to prepare this letter. Rick submitted the OC's draft letter to the RRF Board, which agreed to sign the letter, and the letter was submitted to the USFWS in July on behalf of the organizations that supported it, including RRF. The letter addressed the issues of concern regarding the proposal from a scientific point of view and took no position on the policy merits of the proposal. The letter encouraged the USFWS to set biologically defensible take limits based on species specific population information and encouraged further research and monitoring needed to obtain baseline information about population status and trends, life history traits, migration routes and timing, habitat needs, and reproductive behavior of species protected under the MBTA. Further information on this issue can be found here:

<http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/2015/2015-12666.html>.

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## **Updated RRF Logo**

Submitted by Libby Mojica

During the October 2014 Board of Directors meeting in Corpus Christi, the RRF Directors voted to support an update to the RRF logo. The original logo of a flying Prairie Falcon was first used by RRF in 1972 and was drawn by artist Robert Katona. The flying Prairie Falcon logo has recognition within the scientific and ornithological communities and it was important for the new logo to retain a strong visual likeness to the existing artwork. Our goal was to modernize the logo and make it more graphically friendly for web and print media. We are proud to announce the new logo on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of RRF.



I want to thank Clint Boal for his feedback on multiple rounds of revisions and the graphic artists at *Odd Moxie* in Williamsburg, VA USA for their amazing work.

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## Update from the International Centre for Birds of Prey

Submitted by Jemima Parry-Jones



So far so good! Being a charity seems to be helping at least financially. In the UK if you are a charity you can ask people who are British tax payers to pay a slightly higher entry fee and then the government will pay Gift Aid, and that makes a big difference to us. I am delighted to say that many many of our visitors are happy to pay the little extra to help us.

The breeding season has been interesting; as usual some successes and some failures. Two baby Striated Caracara's (also known as Forster's Caracara, the Falkland Island Caracara and Jonny Rook) have joined the family. We had to hand rear them as their parents are inclined to eat the young here. The two are inseparable and incredibly noisy. They are really interesting birds and into just everything. We also hatched two Andean Condors. Carl Jones of Mauritius



Kestrel fame has the original hand reared male from London Zoo, who must be well over 30 years old now, and a female from a zoo in Europe. They lay fertile eggs and we have hatched them for the last 3 years. We tried putting the chick back last year, but they were so keen to brood it that they squashed it. We are going to try again next year in a slightly different way. When you rear one of these birds you really understand how very different they are from the Old World Vultures.

Speaking of which, the breeding programme in India is going really well and I am proud to tell you that this year we bred over 60 young vultures, 12 of which were Slender-billed Vultures which are the rarest of the 3 critically endangered Gyps vultures in South East Asia. It is a sad reflection on the world that vultures are now the most endangered group of birds worldwide. However it is good to know that we are getting close now to the first releases of some of our captive bred birds. As long as we can fulfill all the criteria needed for a release programme. Sadly, India has for some reason (best known to themselves) apparently and just recently, banned the use of satellite tagging of any animal or bird in India, which puts our release programme in jeopardy as it is crucial that we are able to track the released birds to check for diclofenac poisoning.



Marshall Telemetry – a US company whose radio telemetry we have used for many years on our birds here, are bringing out a new satellite transmitter for falconers. Not only does it tell you where you bird is, it tells you how far it has flown, how high it has flown and how fast it has flown. All stuff that falconers are dying to know and have been exaggerating about for years (!) will now become fact.

We are launching it in the UK at our Falconry Weekend on Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, and I am really looking forward to seeing the results!

Once the weekend is over, my curator and I are leaving for India to teach a husbandry, incubation, and first aid rehabilitation course where we hope we will have attendees from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is hard work, but well worth it as it moves the project on in several countries and several of which we are advocating not the captive breeding, but instead creating Vultures Safe Zones (VSZ's) which has been pioneered in Nepal, and the ability to look after injured, poisoned or sick vultures that will inevitably come in as time goes on.

To be able to understand some of the vulture release programmes, we went out to Bulgaria recently to look at the Eurasian Griffon Vulture release programme run by Green Balkans. They were incredibly helpful, took us to three of their release sites and explained what worked and what did not. They have release 180 birds in the last five years, over half are still known to be alive and more may be. They had their first breeding in the wild this year. It was a good learning experience and one that gave us a good number of aspects to think about.



It appears that much of our work at the moment is vulture orientated. However we did manage to see the Bulgarian Saker release project as well and are now going to send them two new male Sakers as they need some fresh blood lines.



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## Raptor News

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### **Second Edition of *Raptors of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East* Published**

Submitted by Daniel Schmidt

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Raptors of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East* is now available in German (publication date 2014).

Theodor Mebs & Daniel Schmidt 2014: *Die Greifvoegel Europas, Nordafrikas und Vorderasiens*.

Kosmos, Stuttgart, Germany (ISBN: 978-3-440-14470-1). 69.90 € (Euros).

The book has 496 pages, 389 color photographs, 346 color drawings and 46 b/w drawings, size is 27.5 x 20 cm. Pages 10-105 are an introduction to the biology of raptors, the following pages deal with 45 breeding raptor species of the Western Palaearctic, every species in a separate chapter. It is a handbook and identification guide for beginners and advanced raptor enthusiasts, also giving up to date numbers of breeding pairs of each species country by country.

Theodor Mebs is the retired director of the State Bird Conservation Department of the state of Northrhine-Westphalia and now lives in north-western Bavaria. Daniel Schmidt is a life member of the RRF and director of the NABU-Centre for Bird Protection in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, southern Germany.



**Peregrine Falcon Traversing the Golden Gate Bridge**

**Northern Pygmy Owl**



© Joe DiDonato

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## **The Peregrine Fund**

Submitted by Erin Katzner

### **Condor conservation partners expand non-lead request to Arizona shooters other than big game hunters**

California Condor conservation in Arizona and Utah achieved a milestone last hunt season with a record number of big game hunters in the species' core range voluntarily using non-lead ammunition or removing lead-infected gut piles from the field. In Arizona, a total of 91% of the big game hunters voluntarily used non-lead ammunition or removed gut piles from the field. In Utah, 84% of big game hunters in the core range did the same.

Now, condor reintroduction partners are expanding voluntary lead reduction efforts towards new groups that can also help keep condors from ingesting lead as the birds scavenge carcasses other than big game. New groups being targeted in expanded education and outreach efforts include small game, bird and varmint hunters, and those that dispatch sick or injured animals in the field, such as ranchers or law enforcement agencies.

The recovery effort is a cooperative program by federal, state, and private partners, including The Peregrine Fund, Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Strip Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management, Grand Canyon and Zion National Parks, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Kaibab and Dixie National Forests.

### **African vultures declining at a critical rate**

An international team of researchers from The Peregrine Fund, the University of St Andrews, and Hawk Conservancy Trust, say African vultures are likely to qualify as 'Critically Endangered' under the International Union for Conservation of Nature's global threat criteria (Ogada et al. 2015, doi: 10.1111/conl.12182).

The study estimated rates of decline over three generations for the following eight vulture species: Bearded Vulture [*Gypaetus barbatus*; -70%), Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*; -92%), White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*; -90%), Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps rueppellii*; -97%), Cape Vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*; -92%), Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*; -83%), Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*; -80%), and White-headed Vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*; -96%).

A major concern of these results is that national parks and game reserves appear to offer these birds little effective protection. Because vultures are so mobile and can easily travel hundreds or thousands of miles, rates of population decline are worryingly high even within protected areas.

### **Successful hatching of Ridgway's hawks in Punta Cana**

The Peregrine Fund has been working to expand the population of critically endangered Ridgway's hawks in the Dominican Republic from Los Haitises National Park to the privately protected Punta Cana resort area. In all, 31 young Ridgway's hawks were relocated from Los Haitises and released in Punta Cana in 2015. Researchers were able to confirm eight pairs formed from previous years' releases with four nesting attempts that produced one fledgling. After seven hawks were electrocuted in Punta Cana in 2014, electrocution was prevented this year by retrofitting 80 power poles with protective phase insulators. In Los Haitises National Park, 87 pairs were monitored with 117 nesting attempts, and 86

nestlings fledged from the monitored nests. Treatment of nestlings for bot fly infestation and other management techniques more than doubled annual productivity in managed nests over unmanaged nests in the park.

This species recovery effort is led by The Peregrine Fund in partnership with Punta Cana Ecological Foundation, Fundación Propagas, and Santo Domingo Zoo with help from EDM International, and support from Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, APLIC, and Power Line Sentry.



**Nestling Ridgway's hawk in the Dominican Republic**



**Gyrfalcons**

### **Gyrfalcons as sentinels of climate change**

The Gyrfalcon is the apex avian predator across the Arctic. The Peregrine Fund and international partners in the Tundra Conservation Network regard this species as a strategic sentinel of climate change, due to its position at the top of the food web, specialized diet, and non-migratory status. Fieldwork in Alaska focuses on seasonal mismatch in prey availability and the timing of Gyrfalcon breeding, with potential consequences at the population level. A total of ca. 750,000 photos taken with nest cameras over two breeding seasons is the basis of this research. A recent effort at the international level involves writing and promoting standardized terminology for breeding surveys, survey methods, and data reporting. The goal is to obtain comparable data over the range of the species and thereby allow range-wide analyses of population cycles and trends.

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## Upcoming Conferences

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### RRF 2015

**4–8 November 2015  
Sacramento, California, USA**

Make sure to save the week of 4–8 November 2015 for the Raptor Research Foundation Conference in Sacramento, California! The conference will be at the Double Tree hotel and hosted by the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. Plan on attending – it's the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Madison Peregrine Conference! Contact **Kate Davis** ([raptors@montana.com](mailto:raptors@montana.com)) to lend a hand.



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## IV Neotropical Raptor Network Conference

**10–13 October 2015  
La Fortuna, Costa Rica**

The Peregrine Fund and the Neotropical Raptor Network, together with Fundación Rapaces de Costa Rica, are organizing the IV Neotropical Raptor Network Conference to be held in La Fortuna, Costa Rica during 10–13 October 2015. For more information go on-line to:

<http://www.neotropicalraptors.org/index.i.html>







## **9th Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network Conference**

**21-25 October 2015  
Chumphon, Thailand**

Conference hosts: Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network (ARRCN) and the Flyway Foundation in partnership with Chumphon Province, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Kasetsart University, Mahidol University, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Kasem Bundit University, the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, and the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST).

The theme of this year's symposium is "Global Raptor Migration – Better Monitoring for Conservation". The mission of ARRCN is the exchange of information among its members, to coordinate research on both resident and migratory species, and through training, education and improved public awareness to promote the conservation of raptors.

Conference website: [http://theflywayfoundation.or.th/the\\_arrcn.html](http://theflywayfoundation.or.th/the_arrcn.html)

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### **ANNOUNCEMENTS and BRIEF NEWS ITEMS**

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#### **For Sale**

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**RRF Publications, Pins, and Decals** – Hard copies of *The Journal of Raptor Research* (Vol. 1-30), most Raptor Research Reports, and RRF pins and decals may be purchased directly from RRF (Angela Matz, 101 12th Ave., Room 110, Fairbanks, AK 99701, USA; email: [angela\\_matz@fws.gov](mailto:angela_matz@fws.gov)). See <http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/publications/journal-of-raptor-research/back-issues> for details and prices. Orders for 4 or more issues receive a 30% discount. Hard copies of *The Journal of Raptor Research* (Vol. 31+) may be purchased from Ornithological Societies of North America (5400 Bosque Blvd, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA;

phone: 1-254-399-9636; email: [business@osnabirds.org](mailto:business@osnabirds.org); web: <http://www.osnabirds.org>).  
Some older issues are not available in hardcopy; but all issues from Vol. 1-39 are available on  
SORA (<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/jrr/>) for free download.

## **Announcements**

### **Raptor Workshop: Accredited through University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point**

Attend this 5-day introductory level field course designed to instruct students in a full-range of the latest field techniques used to study raptors. "Introduction to Raptor Field Techniques" will be held in Stevens Point, WI by Eugene Jacobs of the Linwood Springs Research Station. The Fall Session is scheduled during the peak of the Saw-whet Owl migration: **12-16 October 2015**. Receive first-hand experience working with: live raptors, capturing, handling, banding techniques, broadcast call surveys, tree climbing, rappelling, blood sampling and more. Cost is \$450 and space is limited, so register early. For more information visit <http://raptorservices.rezgo.com>.

### **Red-tailed Hawk Blood Samples**

Available: 20+ blood samples taken from Red-tailed Hawks in and around Hartford, CT. Most samples are from known resident hawks (territorial adults and juveniles) but some may be from northeastern migrants. If these samples could be useful for a genetics study of this species, or of Buteos, in general, please contact Dr. Joan Morrison (Email: [joan.morrison@trincoll.edu](mailto:joan.morrison@trincoll.edu) or Tel: (860) 297-4120).



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